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Senators' Panel May Subpoena 3 Ex-U.S. Aides

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 27 — A Senate committee has tentatively decided to subpoena three former White House officials said by the Reagan Administration to know about the diversion of millions of dollars to the Nicaraguan rebels, a Congressional official said tonight.

The White House, meanwhile, said President Reagan would not be questioned in the Justice Department's inquiry into the matter.

The Congressional official said that among those expected to be asked to appear before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and to testify under oath were Adm. John M. Poindexter, the former national security adviser, Lieut. Col. Oliver L. North, the aide who the Administration said was responsible for the operation, and Robert C. McFarlane, a former national security adviser.

No date has been set for the hearings.

A Request for Names

Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d said this week that Colonel North was the only government official who knew of the diversion of money from the sale of arms to Iran to the contras, as the Nicaraguan rebels are known. Mr. Meese said Admiral Poindexter learned of it in the last year, but did not stop it. Mr. McFarlane, he said, did not

learn about the aid to the contras until this year, several months after leaving Government.

The Congressional official said that the former White House aides would not be covered by executive privilege, under which the executive branch holds its internal dealings to be exempt from Congressional inquiry. It was not clear whether executive privilege

would cover the conversations the aides were involved in during their White House service.

The official said that lower-level officials at the Central Intelligence Agency and other Government agencies would be brought before the committee and questioned about the help they gave Colonel North in the operation. They will also be asked to identify the senior officials who authorized these activities.

Senator Patrick J. Leahy, the vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee, said tonight that members of Congress wanted to take a long, skeptical look at the assertion that only three people knew money was being funneled to the rebels.

"It may be wishful thinking on the part of some in the Administration to have Colonel North take the blame for everything," he said. "Colonel North did not act alone."

Senator Leahy, a Vermont Democrat, said he was not disturbed by possible destruction of documents reported by Administration officials today.

"There are enough people who can recreate anything in any document," he said.

Referring to his nine years as a prosecutor in Vermont, Senator Leahy added:

"I want to remind a lot of people that if they want any points for cooperation, now is the time. One of the reasons I have said we should have a special prosecutor is that I am not looking for people's resignations, I'm looking for people's indictments. If they broke the law, I want them indicted and sent to prison."